

Hazrat Maulana Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani Sahab (May Allah Ta'ala protect and preserve him),
Vice President Darul Uloom Karachi

Memories

(Episode 13)

At the House in Lasbela House

We stayed in a flat at Campbell Street near Burns Road until Ramadan 1374H (approximately May 1955). We resided in it for five years. This span of time proved to be very fortuitous for us. It was during our stay in this house that we were blessed with the opportunity of performing Hajj, about which I have mentioned before. It was also here that my elder brother, Hazrat Maulana Mufti Muhammad Rafi Sahab (May his shade be extended) completed his memorization of the Quran and also recited the Quran in Taraweeh prayers for the first time. While we were staying in this house, Darul Uloom was established in Nanak Warah and we formally started our studies. It was here only that our elder sister, respected Ateeqah Khatoon Sahiba, who had come as a widow from Deoband, got married to Hazrat Maulana Nur Ahmad Sahab (May Allah's mercy be upon him). It was here that our second sister, whom we call *Chhoti Aapa*, got married to the late Hafiz Shafqat Ali Sahab of Lahore, and our elder brother, the late respected Muhammad Razi Sahab, also got married here, with his wedding being officiated over by Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Yusuf Binnori Sahab (May Allah's mercy be upon him). And it was during our stay in this house that our respected father (May Allah's mercy be upon him) and his companions, as members of Islamic Education Board, drafted the Islamic foundations of the Constitution of the country, as a result of which a first draft of the Constitution, together with enforceable Islamic articles, was prepared in 1954. (Even though Governor-General Ghulam Muhammad later dismissed the Constitutional Assembly and threw the country off the track, and this draft Constitution was deposited into the vault of forgetfulness).

Even so, this was also a rented house and our respected father (May Allah's mercy be upon him) wished to have his own house in Karachi. Before migrating from India, our respected father (May his secret be sanctified) owned considerable properties. Besides a big house, he also owned inherited agricultural lands as well as a garden which he had planted with much enthusiasm. And mango trees of that garden were expected to bear their first fruits in the year in which he migrated to Pakistan. However, our respected father (May his secret be sanctified) used to say: "The day I took the step out of the house and the garden, all those possessions left

my heart.” Thus, after our migration to Pakistan, the Indian Government took possession of all those properties.

At long last, after an agreement was made between Pakistan and India, it was decided that those who had left behind their properties due to the population exchange would be given a share, according to a defined formula, from the abandoned properties in the new country. As a result, in lieu of the properties he had left behind in India, our respected father (May Allah’s mercy be upon him) received a plot of land in Karachi’s locality of Lasbela House, on which he constructed a four-room house. (I remember that our respected father (May Allah’s mercy be upon him) had said that Rs. 8000 had been spent in constructing those four rooms.)

Construction of that house was completed in Ramadan 1374H and we were waiting for *Eid* to move in. We brothers decided to spend the 27th night of Ramadan Ul Mubarak by conducting *Shabeena*¹ on the roof of the house. My respected brother Hazrat Maulana Mufti Muhammad Rafi Sahab (May his shade be extended) is *Mashallah* a Hafiz. He invited several of his classmates who had also memorized the Quran and conducted *Shabeena* in *Taraweeh* prayer itself. Probably ten or twelve *Juz* of the Quran were recited in the *Taraweeh* prayer. And after *Eid*, on 4th Shawwal 1374H (equivalent to around 25 May 1955), we moved to that house.

While we could walk to the Madrasa from our house at Burns Road, the house at Lasbela House was around 3 to 3.5 miles away from the Madrasa, so we two brothers would go by cycle. Hazrat Maulana Mufti Muhammad Rafi Sahab (May his shade be extended) would ride the bicycle while I would sit behind on the carrier, or on the frame in front. Sometimes, if the cycle would not be available for some reason, we would have to go by bus, in which case we had to change two buses to reach the Madrasa.

Travel to Lahore and Deoband

In the same academic year, when I was twelve years old, my respected mother had to undertake two journeys; one was to Lahore, while the second was to Deoband where our respected mother wished to meet her brothers and other relatives. This was in the middle of my academic semester and these journeys were expected to take, perhaps, more than a month. Absence of such a period of time would be detrimental to my studies. However, I was only twelve years old at the time, and neither could my mother travel without me nor could I stay without her. Thus, on 1st November 1955 I also departed with her. Our respected father (May Allah’s mercy be upon him) had bade me to attend the classes in Jamiya Ashrafiya as long as I remained in Lahore, and in Darul Uloom Deoband as long as I stayed in Deoband. Consequently, upon reaching Lahore, when I presented myself to Hazrat Maulana Mufti Muhammad Hasan Sahab (May his secret be sanctified), and mentioned our respected father’s

¹ Prayer in which large portions of the Quran are recited in a single night

(May Allah's mercy be upon him) instructions, he kindly permitted me to sit in the relevant classes. As a result, I continued attending all my lessons there. Coincidentally, two of the sons of Hazrat Mufti Sahab, i.e. Hazrat Maulana Abdur Raheem Sahab (May Allah's mercy be upon him) (who later passed away at a young age) and Hazrat Maulana Fazl Ur Raheem Sahab (May his shade be extended) (who is the current Principal of Jamiya Ashrafiya) were also studying the same books as me. Thus, I received the honour of being their class fellow, and we would attend all the classes together.

Even though it was not necessary for the lessons here to be at the same point as I had left in Darul Uloom, and it also takes some time to get accustomed to a new teacher. Therefore, the detriment to my studies which was bound to happen due to this kind of travel could not be fully compensated. However, something is better than nothing, so I was contented with these opportunities. And later this contentedness turned into a great treasure, in that our teacher of *Sharh Jami* and *Sharh Tahzeeb* went on leave. Thinking that this was like salt rubbed on my wound, I proposed to the two sons of Hazrat Mufti Sahab (May his secret be sanctified), who were both my classmates, that we should present ourselves to Hazrat and request for a substitute teacher for those two books. Consequently, all three of us went to Hazrat and presented our petition. Hazrat was delighted at our request, and responded with something which was beyond our wildest expectations. Hazrat said: "Don't worry at all, I will teach you these books. You can come here during the scheduled time of those classes." Our happiness knew no bounds at hearing these words. Hazrat had stopped teaching since a very long time. He had become handicapped by one leg after it had to be amputated, and his mere existence in this state was an embodiment of enlightenment and right guidance. His company was ever-replete with anecdotes and quotes of his Shaykh, Hakeem Ul Ummah Hazrat Thanvi (May Allah's mercy be upon him). In that small age of mine, he appeared to be the most holy personality in the world, and whenever the thought of doing *Baiy'ah* with a pious person would occur, my heart would not incline to anyone other than him. Someone looking at his condition at that time would not be able to imagine that he would teach books like *Sharh Jami* and *Sharh Tahzeeb*. However, Hazrat showered us with his kindnesses. His house was located on the third storey of a flat in the Madrasa of Neela Gumbad. We would present ourselves in his service daily. We would appreciate during the lessons as to how simply this epitome of holiness and *Wilayah*¹ made us understand the intricacies of *Nahw* (Arabic grammar) and *Mantiq* (Logic). The discussion about *Hasil* and *Mahsool* in *Sharh Jami* is considered quite abstruse, but I remember that Hazrat had explained it to us in a breeze. Similarly, our syllabus of *Sharh Tahzeeb* was until the discussion about *Daabitah*, and the topic about *Daabitah*, being difficult to understand, was removed from the syllabus. But Hazrat said that I will teach you that topic

¹ The quality of being a Wali, i.e. a friend of Allah

as well. And he did teach it, and taught it wonderfully. May Allah Ta'ala have infinite mercy on him.

After staying in Lahore for around twenty six days our respected mother had to travel to Deoband on 27 November 1955. *Bhai Jaan* (respected Muhammad Zaki Kaifi) got ready to take our respected mother to Deoband, so we departed by train with him. Travelling to India offered newfangled hardships in those days. Clearing customs and thereafter boarding the train were no less than the Plain of Gathering of this world. That train took us to Amritsar, and a second train from there, which traversed across the entire Eastern Punjab, arrived in Deoband station late into the night. Having become accustomed to the urban life of Karachi and Lahore for six years, the places of Deoband etched in my childhood memory suddenly appeared much smaller. It seemed as if someone had abruptly miniaturized the images of the station, platform, and other places of Deoband which had been entrenched in my mind. There was a considerable crowd of our relatives on the platform, and the scene of our respected mother (May Allah's mercy be upon her) meeting them, and exuberance reflecting from their faces was worth beholding.

We stayed in the house of our maternal uncle, respected Anwaar Kareem Sahab (May Allah's mercy be upon him). The next day I visited my childhood streets and our house. Our house was taken over by *Sharnarthis* but they let us in. The following inscription put by our respected father (May Allah's mercy be upon him) was now inviting us to take lesson:

دنیا کا کچھ قیام نہ سمجھو، کرو خیال

اس گھر میں تم سے پہلے بھی کوئی مقیم تھا

Don't trust your stay in this world, take heed

Before you, someone else used to stay in this house

Our respected father (May Allah's mercy be upon him) had had this couplet inscribed when this house was being constructed, when we did not even imagine leaving it. But today this couplet was giving a lesson to its new inhabitants. Besides this, my elder brother respected Muhammad Razi Usmani Sahab (May Allah's mercy be upon him), when we were about to leave this house, had written a couplet with coal under an eave on the upper storey. This couplet could also be made out at the time:

یہ چمن یونہی رہے گا اور ہزاروں جانور

اپنی اپنی بولیاں سب بول کر اُڑ جائیں گے

This garden will remain, while thousands of birds

Will chirp their talks and fly away

Anyway! After entering our own house with others' permission, and becoming grateful to them, we left for our neighbourhood. Everything of our neighbourhood was where we had left it, but appeared smaller than before. Even the square, about which I have mentioned before that it used to be like a big ground or stadium to us, appeared as if it had shrunk into a small courtyard.

Throughout the different stages of life one considers various things big and important, but later, when their reality manifests itself, one laughs as to how trifle a thing did I consider big and important. This world also appears very big today. But once we reach the Hereafter, when the true reality of this world will reveal itself, we will surely laugh at today's myopic view of ours.

Anyway! During my stay in Deoband I began attending my lessons in Darul Uloom Deoband, as my respected father (May Allah's mercy be upon him) had instructed me. *Sharh Jami*, at that time, was being taught by Hazrat Maulana Naseer Ud Deen Sahab (May Allah's mercy be upon him) (who later became Shaykhul Hadith). *Alhamdulillah* I got the opportunity to benefit from him. *Kanz Ud Daqaiq* and *Sharh Tahzeeb* were under Hazrat Maulana As'ad Ullah Sahab, and *Maqamat Hariri* was under Hazrat Maulana Jalil Ur Rahman. My paternal cousin, Hazrat Maulana Sayyid Hasan Sahab (May Allah's mercy be upon him) was, at the time, a competent and well-liked teacher at Darul Uloom. He also used to teach *Maqamat Hariri*, and both of us wished that I could study *Maqamat* under him. However, his class conflicted with my class of *Kanz Ud Daqaiq*. As a result, I missed out on benefitting from him. But one benefit coming out of our visit to Deoband was that I received the good fortune of being a student, though an informal one, of Darul Uloom Deoband. And during my time there I also received the honour of seeing some pious personalities belonging to this institute. I was so small of age that I did not get the courage to meet Shaykhul Islam Hazrat Maulana Husain Ahmad Sahab Madani (May Allah's mercy be upon him), but *Alhamdulillah* received the good fortune of seeing him from far.

A maternal aunt of mine was residing at a small distance from Deoband, in a village of Tehsil *Khatauli* called *Sarai Rasulpur*. Our respected mother (May Allah's mercy be upon her) went to visit her for two days, and I accompanied her. *Khatauli* is the town which was the residential place of our spiritual forefather Hazrat Mian Ji Munnay Shah Sahab (May Allah's mercy be upon him). From here, a dirt road along the bank of a stream led to *Sarai Rasulpur*. We took this route on a Rickshaw. *Sarai Rasulpur* was a smallish lush, verdant and idyllic village, the Imam of whose solitary Masjid was our maternal uncle, who had taken up residence here for this very purpose. These two days spent in that village were extremely pleasant. This was my first time witnessing a purely rural life, and the following interesting incident also took place during this

visit. When a neighbour of our aunt came to know that we were visiting from Karachi she called for me to her house. She was an old lady, and since I was only a twelve-year-old child she did not observe *purdah* from me. Making me sit in her house, she asked: "Have you come from Karachi?" When I replied in the affirmative, she said: "Then you must know my son Husain. How is he doing?" I replied: "I don't know him." At this, her astonishment was worth seeing. She exclaimed, in a tone of utter surprise: "*Hai!* You live in Karachi and still don't know Husain?" I asked her: "Where does he live?" She replied: "*Aray!* He lives in the same Karachi in which you live." Now I understood that she was considering Karachi to be similar to *Sarai Rasulpur*. She assumed that just as all residents of *Sarai Rasulpur* know each other, similarly all residents of Karachi must also know each other. At this I tried to explain to her that Karachi is such a big city that if one end of Karachi is considered to be here, the other end would be in Meerath. Hearing this, she was so bewildered as though I was telling her a tale from the Arabian Nights.

Now it comes to mind that when the Noble Quran describes paradise to be comparable in size to all the skies and the earth, or when the Noble Messenger (Peace be upon him) tells us that the lowest inhabitant of paradise would be given a place which would be twice the size of the whole world, then our astonishment at hearing this is comparable to that old countryside lady's bewilderment who was unable to imagine that Karachi could be so much bigger than *Sarai Rasulpur* that all of its residents do not know each other, and whose naïveness makes us laugh. But those Noble Messengers who have either personally witnessed the world above with their own eyes, or the Creator of the world above has directly informed them about it, when they look at us naïve inhabitants of the earth displaying our bewilderment, they don't laugh at us, rather they have pity on us.

Anyway! These journeys to Lahore and Deoband with my respected mother were very pleasant, and turned out to be a means of my acquiring many blessings.

While I was still in Lahore, our respected father (May his secret be sanctified), on behalf of Jamiat-e-Ulama-e-Islam, while touring West Pakistan reached Lahore, and was planned to continue his tour of Punjab and thereafter NWFP. I got the chance to accompany my respected father (May his secret be sanctified) on those journeys. Before giving an account of those tours, it seems appropriate to describe my respected father's activities of those times.

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